

LITERATURE

OF BLACK STRUGGLE IN JA. 1968/69

"The events of October 16 have again opened a new phase in the struggle for liberation in this country." (Excerpt from a pamphlet).

AFRICAN YOUTH MOVE

The first two publications we have to look at for 1968 are BLACKMAN SPEAKS and OUR OWN. In them we find the formative patterns for the several African Youth Move publications appearing before and after the Rodney ban. The vanguard journalistic role of AYM publications is only now being appreciated in some circles especially now that Bogle-L'Ouverture has published Walter Rodney's "Groundings With My Brothers". This publication is very important and has to be assessed historically. It is very similar to the work Mrs Garvey did in the nineteen twenties to get Garvey's speeches, writings and axioms together under the title-Philosophy & Opinions. "Groundings With My Brothers" and "Philosophy & Opinions" are transactions of the Black Struggle, representing the work of no single individual.

All of the material in Rodney's book appeared in little journals published during 1968-69. The early issues of Blackman Speaks and two publications of Our Own were news-magazine type publications appearing under trying circumstances. One eye was open watching out for the police and the other arranging for publication with all the difficulties involved in that process. Blackman Speaks started out in mimeograph form then went into print. Our Own was printed. Blackman Speaks dealt with the Black American, African and local struggle, publishing the African History and Culture talks from Wembley Sports Club by Rodney. The issue of June 1968, ^{beneath} carried a back page picture of Fidel Castro and a quotation/the picture read:-

THE EXPLOITATION OF MAN HAS TO BE DUG OUT BY
THE ROOTS...

The next issue appearing on the 76th Anniversary of Haile Selassie's Birthday in June 1968 editorialized:-

"This newspaper the BMS, is a medium through which, Rastafarian brothers and the oppressed people of Jamaica, can keep in contact with matters affecting our daily life, and showing what steps are to be taken to bring about a change in the old colonial system."

The timing of this publication is significant. The real journalistic work is never written. To understand this one would have to grasp the relation between the journalism and the preparation for the celebration of the Emperor's birthday. Anyone who was outside WARD theatre in July 1968 to attend the 'BIG STAGE SHOW.. Roland Alphonso & His Band, Bob Marley and the Wailers, when there were as many people inside as well as outside the theatre, would understand the mobilization which takes place every July in Jamaica, especially, but not only, among Rastafari.

The issue of BMS which appeared on the 77th birthday of Haile Selassie identified the local struggle in Jamaica with that of the Black Panthers in the United States. The BMS writer stated:

"This Youth Move is very similar to the move that the Black Panthers keep up in the states, and it aims at creating I & I own institutions and making man independent from men own."

The repression of African Youths and the vehicles which give expression to their activity and attitudes is as great as is the repression against the Panthers in the United States.

All African Youth Move publications are Rastafari based. By this I mean the total identification with a force in Jamaica which has always asserted its right to struggle and constantly reaffirms that position in action.. Of necessity poetry and articles on the Emperor of Ethiopia appear frequently. The reason for this is explained in an editorial in the

issue published when the Emperor celebrated his 77th birthday in Ethiopia:-

"The life and works of H.I.M. Emperor Haile Selassie I over the past 77 years has served as inspiration for all Man interested in the establishment of Freedom, Equality and Justice throughout God's earth. In mad times as those when men spend billions of dollars to wipe out people in Asia and to enforce slavery in South Africa, and at the same time waste starving mankind's resources to reach the moon, the Emperor's example serves to strengthen man's faith in God. Sillassie's life is a record of of unceasing labour for the betterment of Man. To this day, the Emperor still works 20 hours a day in the Imperial offices, in his efforts aimed, as H.I.M. puts it at 'increasing the well-being of our people and aiding their progress on the road to happiness and the civilization attained by all independent and cultural nations.."

This lengthy quote is very important for it shows very clearly the terms within which Haile Selassie is written and spoken about by Rastafari in Jamaica. This kind of journalism is 40 years old in one sense, though much older in another, depending on what measuring rod we use. It is very similar to Garvey's journalism in the Blackman newspaper in Jamaica in 1930 when the Emperor was crowned. There is also similarity on another level. The colonial press not only found Garvey a subversive but also

Rastafari in the countryside. That is the historical thread we have to bear in mind when we look at the objective developments in Ethiopia itself and that around the Emperor in Jamaica. Whether we like it or not they represent two vitally different historical currents which have their own logic in Africa and the Caribbean. This is only the starting point on that question. There is very much more left to be said.

CENSORSHIP

Needless to say, the journalism of decolonization faces direct censorship, not only from police action, but more importantly from the attitudes of those who relate exclusively to the historically censored mass-media, so reflecting all the prejudices that relationship breeds. Rev Henry in his newsletter writes:-

"As you will understand, I am prohibited from the Press, Radio and Television. My only medium of Communication is by pamphlets, the Government also confiscate my passport so I cannot go and do God's work as I am instructed by Him."

That is the situation. The 77th Birthday issue of Blackman Speaks carried an important news item on the removal of the SONS OF NEGUS programme on JBC Radio. This news item was not developed in its proper context. It came after the censorship imposed on several radio journalists with dissenting viewpoints, in addition to Walter Rodney, Amy Jacques Garvey, and Prince Buster (Minister Cecil X). The JBC decision to ban this Sunday morning programme was based on the

following:- Rastafarians were saying Haile Selassie is God, it disturbed racial harmony in Jamaica, was seditious and contrary to Public Feeling. That is a very ancient colonial refrain, it may well have been copied directly from some memo one colonial official had passed to another before the legalization of censorship. The brief BMS report commented on this in the light of the continuation of other religious programmes. Back to the Bible, Billy Graham and a host of others which dominate the Sunday airwaves. The Sons of Negus programme had a ritual and drumming which dealt with Babylon in a way which JBC radio had not expected when it patronised Rastafari. This programme was banned and religious paganism continues.

VANKING OF POLITRICKS & POLITICAL IMPRISONMENT

The "vanking of politricks" is a constant theme in African Youth Movement publications. Among worker-publications one finds a similar slogan - 'non-political unionism'. It means the same thing and reflects the condemnation of constitutional politics and unionism which is politricks and non-politics in that it suppresses the politics of the mass of the population in an alliance with Imperialism. In the March 1969 issue of Blackman Speaks there are bold headlines crying out - YOUTH MUST VANK POLITRICKS. This came at a time when the political machinery of whom the police and military are a key part was in motion for the farce called Local Government elections. The significance

of the BMS political position is heightened by a news item, which shows this ^{was} no easy thing for many youths to do. Moreover it shows that the fact of political imprisonment is something that will not start to happen when some "well-known" radical gets imprisoned, as is inevitable, but has always taken place. The news item reads:-

"Albert Roberts otherwise called Arnas. Police has been brutalizing this bretheren for the past five months because the youth is a progressive youth who defends no form of politics. The youth has lived in Franklin Town for his entire life. He is now twenty. Police from Elletson Town Police Station has been at this youth's neck trying to incriminate him because he will not turn an informer."

This youth was threatened with death, others have been murdered. That is the meaning of that issue of BMS. The slogan of vanking politics has a concrete basis to it which has to be fully appreciated and understood in relation to other forces, especially the exploited workers who are now undermining the political structures of government through consistent strike action, separating their independent action from the counter-revolutionary tactics of the Bustamante Industrial Trade Union, and the National Workers Union-unions of local - government political power, unions of local employers and unions of Imperialism.

Our Own magazine of August & September 1968 had very good cuts of Rastafari & the Middle Passage. The

first issue carried on its back page Ras Daniel Heartman's PRINCE MAN I drawing of his youth. In "Our Own" important statements were made by and on Rastafari in Jamaica. Some of Rodney's "African History" talks were also published.

OCTOBER 1968 & THE JOURNALISM OF REACTION

BMS & Our Own were achieving much as journalistic forces, so laying the basis for "Truth" and other African Youth Move publications, their machinery being well oiled for the post-October 16th period in terms of a revolutionary network of African youth. Babylon tried to destroy this network as is evident in at least one court case of 1968. A network of police informers came into full play. That network is now under reorganization as is made evident by the new faces. African Youth Move first published Rodney's speech at Sir George Williams University after he was banned. This speech is now featured in the recent Bogle L'Ouverture publication of Rodney's book. What to me / ^{was} the most vital 68/69 publication appeared as an AYM statement titled-"The Truth-concerning Dr Walter Rodney, Africans in Jamaica and a Critique of Certain Sayings by Government Men.." This pamphlet opened with Psalm 37. It was a rejoinder to the Daily Gleaner's journalism during the Rodney period which could only be described as total censorship let loose in panic at what it could not contain and can never contain indefinitely. The article appeared in two sections. The first dealt with the University and its role now. The writer made

the AYM position very clear:-

"Although some persons may believe that the most important task or function of a university is to churn out cogs to be fitted into some foreigners notion of progress the population of Jamaica it seems is of a different mind..."

Part 2 was entitled.. "New Ideas or Plain Crap." The revolutionary spirit of this pamphlet has not been surpassed in any other publication since. AYM went on to publish Rodney's pieces on African History and Culture and to circulate it free of cost.

Just around October 16th the Sufferer was published. This is an important publication for it indicated the current which was not to be found only in Kingston but in the country parts. The Sufferer appeared as "The Voice of Black Power in St. Ann", one of the principal feeding grounds for the hawk of American Imperialism in bauxite throughout the Caribbean. A subsequent issue of the Sufferer appeared when Dr Martin Luther King Jnr. won posthumously the 10,000 dollars Marcus Garvey Human Rights Prize. Jamaica had been foremost in sponsoring Human Rights Year in 1968 and the Sufferer used this occasion to ask:- "We wonder how he would have expressed himself had he the time to see the REAL JAMAICA.

The apologists: politicians and clergymen, radio, t.v. and newspaper journalists were all echoing a statement King had made on a visit to Jamaica-that he had never felt happier anywhere else. The Sufferer was published under great strain and attracted heavy police mobilization in St. Ann.

THE REACTION

After the October 16th scare came an issue of the lame campus newspaper SCOPE, Free University Press Bulletins, COMMENT, SOCIAL SCIENTIST, Bongo-man, several articles by Norman Girvan in New World journal and Rising Star magazine. The tendency which this writing reflected came from those on the Mona campus who had been convulsed into action as a result of the exposure "post-independence politricks" suffered after the Rodney ban. In Trinidad Moko newspaper appeared and in Jamaica there was Abeng. 1969 saw 34 weeks of Abeng weekly newspaper. One of the fundamental premises which guided Abeng newspaper was the presence of a journalistic vacuum which forced it into a mistake of seeing the AYM publications and not recognizing them for what they were-as journalistic expressions of the pre-existing struggle in Jamaica. The journalism of emergency couldn't help making that mistake especially the people responsible for it. This article is written primarily to expose that fallacy. There was no journalistic vacuum. So much was being overlooked precisely because of the very anti-historical or superficial and individual bases on which a number of radical Caribbean newspapers made their appearances. So, instead of serving to forward the struggle in fact several of these newspapers are backward expressions.

After the exasperation of the Rodney period one had to face the objective situation in Jamaica and start there, not only start but catch up with the progressive forces. The journalism of reaction only becomes revolutionary

in relation to the concrete and not in relation to opportunist connections with certain progressive elements or ^{to} ideas which these forces apparently cherish.

CLAUDIUS HENRY

Rev. Henry's Newsletter was also an important publication coming out of the countryside and especially in the sugar belt of Clarendon where the Prime Minister has his political constituency. Rodney had addressed several Claudius Henry meetings and in fact he had participated at one of Henry's church openings. This association Rev Henry revealed one Sunday evening when he brought his Clarendon forces to meet Kingstonians at Wildman St. in Eastern Kingston, drums and all. He issued his newsletter from The New Creation International Peacemakers Association. Henry saw Rodney in the line of Bedward, Marcus Garvey and himself. They were doing the same thing in different ways. There is an historical statement Henry makes which we must not forget. Henry writes:

"Before I was sentenced to prison by the trial Judge Sir Herbert Duffus, He said to me: 'Henry your doctrine is a Wicked Lying one, it is like that of Howell who came to this country thirty-five years ago with his Rastafarian doctrine and misled the people, and now he is in the Lunatic Asylum'. Although I left Mr Howell in the prison that same morning Sabbath on October 29, 1960 on my way to court."

40 years of Rastafari-repression is expressed in that statement.

Another Henry document was issued in September 1969. It was entitled "Michael Manley Is Our Political Leader". Michael Manley, leader of the political opposition, is addressed as Joshua, the son of David, David being the late Norman Manley. This pamphlet runs the risk of being misunderstood. Henry challenges the Manley leadership to free Jamaica from racial hate, political violence, high society injustices and victimization. It is a challenge rather than a statement of alliance. Moreover it reflects a question of urgency in Clarendon where Henry's organization is in danger and faces at any time physical repression. Just because police-military raids have ceased that doesn't mean that either repression is not imminent or isn't being carried on in other forms. Play fool fe catch wise is the key to that political document.

BOGLE L'OUVERTURE PUBLICATIONS

Bogle-L'Ouverture publications have had one important consequence—that is they indicate the necessity of basing our activity on a real theoretical basis rooted in its historical past and the natural development out of that past. The Blackman Time Now series in Abeng have also to be seen in the light of this necessity. CLR James' speech on -BLACK POWER ITS PAST TODAY AND THE WAY AHEAD—was reproduced with this basis in mind. In the foreword James pens these words—

"Every revolutionary movement needs a solid ideological foundation. The movement for Black Power is conspicuously deficient here, in notable comparison with its magnificent....."

militancy, above all in the United States."

In his African notebook Fanon says exactly the same thing. The first James pamphlet-"The Making of the Caribbean Peoples" offers further insight into the Caribbean. These two pamphlets were well received and distributed. Their first book publication, Groundings With My Brothers does not include two articles by Rodney. The first was written for the Social Scientist journal-UWI- on the 'Tanzanian Revolution' and his 'Letter to Afro-Jamaica Associations' which was published in Bongo-man Issue no.2 .

PANIC AT UWI

A factor of the Rodney period which has not been taken into account is the panic Rodney caused within academic circles at UWI itself, especially among certain Social Scientists and Historians who have now started to steel themselves against further upheavals. This is evident in some of their public speeches and literary work (academic papers etc.) Again this re-steeling was bound to happen because of developments in the society and what is happening on campus is an expression of that. The repressive apparatus of the State finds its intellectual defenders out of splits like those occurring during 1968/69. Again there is very much more to be said here.

ORGANIZATIONAL PUBLICATIONS

Two independent unions have been publishing regularly. The DAWN is the "News & Information Bulletin Organ of the Public Cleansing Work

-ers Union-' --"No Hands can Free Us But Our Own.." Then there is the Service Station Attendants Union-news bulletin and the Printers & Allied Workers Association Bulletin. Another publication of a slightly different nature is the PEOPLE'S NEWS published by the African Co-operative Ltd. Another 1969 publication was issued by the African Revolutionary Movement with quotations and a picture of Kwame Nkrumah. It appeared just around the time of Jamaica's entry into the OAS. On the back cover of ARM is a map of Jamaica and under it the statement-JAMAICA MEMBER OF THE OAS? NOT OVER MY DEAD BODY, JAMAICA MUST BE FREE.

The Jamaica Omnibus Service Workers Association(JOSWA) published vital statements during their recent Jan. 1970 strike which hit at the combined action of the Employers:the Gleaner, the BITU-NWU, the Employers Federation-all of whom were crying -Wildcat Strike and forcing Government's hand to make anti-worker legislation work or pass new laws if the only ones couldn't work.

THE BLACKMAN

During 1969 the African Nationalist Union was formed...its founder being Marcus Garvey Jnr. Its journalistic organ-The Blackman- is a well-edited monthly journal. It is the only publication so far to explicitly discuss Socialism in Jamaica. The phrase "African Socialism" may appear contradictory to some but in any case, socialism in Jamaica would appear just as contradictory. These people refuse to look behind the representation...to what is the natural development for the future.

HIGH SCHOOL PUBLICATIONS

Many high-schools acted in solidarity with other forces during October 1968. In October 1969 several students from Jamaica College, Excelsior and Kingston College supported October 16th/activities hailed as-DAY OF BLACK SOLIDARITY. These students also protested the banning of C.Y. Thomas and J. Degia, both of whom were associated in some way with Abeng weekly newspaper. Some students published their own magazine, called LIJ. This publication couldn't escape censorship. In the editorial of issue no. 2 we find:-

"We would like to mention that one Mr Bogle, headmaster of Wolmers, suppressed the magazine at Wolmers with threats of expulsion of any youth found reading LIJ, and he went further by confiscating twenty copies from the distributor.."
In the Abeng leaflet of October 16th, 1969 Jamaica College sixth-formers issued a statement to their headmaster which read:-

"We, the undersigned, will not be attending regular classes on Thursday, October 16. We plan to attend the lectures and meetings that will be held at the University of the West Indies on matters that affect us as students and members of the society on that day."--

This is only an inkling of what is happening among high school students throughout the island.

CAMPUS JOURNALISM

TUSSLE, a well-needed campus publication is published by the External Affairs Commission of the Guild of Undergraduates. Issue no. 2 has been the best so far, dealing at length with the Sir George Williams issue and the network of imperial diplomacy between the Canadian and Caribbean Governments. Issue no. 2 was published after the visit of three W.I. students at Sir George who are on trial, to Jamaica.

One issue of SCOPE newspaper appeared in 1969 and it might as well not ^{re-}appear unless it changes from its very dangerous Social-Science bias. Amid all that has been happening in the Caribbean and elsewhere an editorial COMMENT headlined-A Question of Tolerance ended this way:-

"It is within the walls of the University that the challenge must be met and the solutions worked out for the benefit of the community.

Let us therefore heed our responsibilities.

This is very backward and represents one of the basic assumptions behind some very respectable Social-Science presentations.

AFRICAN YOUTH MOVE -HARAMBEE

The first issue of HARAMBEE came out in December 1969. The cover is beautifully designed as have the four issues of

Revolutionary Poems and the Black Struggle pamphlet which have carried the best artwork of all the mimeo-publications under review. This issue of HARAMBEE deals with Black Panther leader Huey Newton, Lessons from Kenya (a critique of Kenyatta and Post-Independence politics in Africa), police murder of a youth-Dicky DaCosta is again taken up with a reprint of the leaflet issued by the Youth Action Committee of Rollington Town, an article and poem on Shaka-the Zulu King, Refugee Camp-prisons in Jamaica. The poetry is also the best of all the literature under review.

FOR 1970

The foremost Worker-publication so far is Land & Labour which is a journal of actual struggle and another piece of evidence to the undermining of the political-party unions by independent worker action.

All this literary activity reflects to some extent the stage of the struggle in Jamaica and contains within it as in anything else the seeds of reaction which can only be combatted by creative activity which is itself revolutionary.

From Message to Afro-Jamaica Associations

Walter Rodney

It is on the very question of Garvey that most work needs to be done in the educational and cultural spheres. Garvey lives on in the hearts of a certain generation of black people in Jamaica. For that reason, the government was forced to recognize him as a national hero. They brought Garvey's bones but not his philosophy. They named a street after him and built a statue in his likeness, but on October 16th they tear-gassed black people who were gathered around the statues of Paul Bogle and Marcus Garvey-how symbolic! The task of bringing Garvey to the black youth must be shouldered by all organizations which are interested in the cultural re-awakening of the Afro-Jamaicans.

African youth in Jamaica today are waging a struggle in their own way against ignorance, unemployment and starvation. They will immediately understand how Garvey's thoughts and deeds relate to their own way of life, and they themselves will create new methods of dealing with the oppressors.

AMY JACQUES GARVEY

Besides, Jamaicans are extremely fortunate in still having amongst themselves Mrs Amy Jacques Garvey, wife of Marcus Garvey, and a black revolutionary fighter in her own right. She must be protected and the best use made of her services. It will be interesting to see whether the Government will be brazen enough to move openly against the Garvey family and the Garveyite philosophy when it is fully propagated. Then, even the blind will see.

This is not a review in the ordinary sense of the word, but on account of the circumstances of how Frank John's "Black Songs", a collection of 33 poems, came to be published. Frank John went to London a few years ago from Trinidad. He has not lived a typical life of a West Indian immigrant but in many respects he has been close to what has been taking place among the Black community in Britain.

In Trinidad he had been (from when he was a young boy) associated with "The Nation", the PNM weekly newspaper and in particular with its editor CLR James. He developed skills as a printery operator and when he went to Britain he intended to train himself further as a printer. For various reasons which we need not go into here he never did do that training. But he did continue to use the skill he has. He is an extremely careful experienced cyclo-style operator and a very successful seller of publications moving about on the streets of London and at meetings. He also was in close touch with the Black Movement in its many shades and - radical sentiment where it existed in London.

In the summer of 1968 he developed the idea of producing a number of pamphlets in stencilled form which would contain material that was urgently needed but which was not available to a growing public. What is loosely called the race question was already at this time very much alive in Britain. In addition the various sections of the black

community were watching closely what was taking place in their own home communities and not least of all the West Indian community. In October 1968 the first pamphlet came out. It was the text of the lecture that CLR James delivered at the Second Conference on West Indian Affairs held in Montreal, Canada in the summer of 1966. Its title was "The Making of the Caribbean Peoples" then two months later "Black Power, Its Past, Today, and The Way Ahead" also by James, was on the streets. The next publication a few weeks later was "Violence in the Toilets", an account of the experiences of a Black teacher-Marina Maxwell- in two schools in an area of London known as Brent, quite close to the notorious Notting Hill area. It should be stated that Frank John is not a "literary" person. He was the person who developed the idea. He was able to draw into it people who did the editing, a sensitive artist and designer, ^{Errol} Lloyd, and a typist Nancy White whose meticulous cutting of stencils was equalled by Frank John's skilled production with the result that these pamphlets, produced in London, although stencilled were of such a quality that the 2/6 price placed on the first two and 1/- for the third were readily obtainable. At about the turn of the year Frank John started showing around to a few people his first attempts at writing poetry. He got a bit bolder and when "Violence in the Toilets" was published he inserted in the

pamphlet two loose leaves with two of his poems-"Sorrow" and "Break the Chains :for Malcolm X.A furthur test of peoples response to his work.

Eventually he brought out as the fourth of the pamphlets "Black Songs".This first edition contained 28 of his poems,which at that time was the bulk of the work he had written.It also had five illustrations done by Errol Lloyd.

Two other publications have followed this:"Black(West Indian) Music!.....A Moving Constant Expression" by Patrick Griffiths and "Talking About Black Art" by Sebastian Clarke.

Of the set the following have been reproduced-The Making of the Caribbean Peoples' and 'Black Power' have been republished here in Jamaica by Bogle L'Ouverture Publications.Marina Maxwell's piece was reprinted in full in the British Institute of Race Relations magazine 'Race Today' and excerpts from "Black(WI) Music' and 'Talking About Black Art' have come out in/London "underground" weekly 'International Times'.Longmacs,who have now republished 'Black Songs'(the original 28 poems and 5 new ones are"a firm of training consultants with a small publishing section attached".

Around about November of 1968 a group of people later to be named Bogle L'Ouverture Publications,started producing material. First was Mrs Amy Jacques Garvey 's Message to the Seminar on the Realities of Black Power which had been held in August 1968. Then Walter Rodney's Message from Canada "Jamaica Today-Bogle's Reminder came out.This was followed by producing prints of a charcoal drawing by Ras Daniel Heartman.The latest production is "Groundings With My Brothers".This is printed and in book form.It is a collection of speeches and statements by Walter Rodney.

It will be immediately obvious that these developments closely parallel the way in which things were moving in the West Indies itself.It can be seen as move to give a sound basis to the rapid currents in politics.The movement will be greatly assisted when we start to examine the works on their own merits.I hope Bongo Man will soon publish a critical examination of Frank John's Black Songs and other similar publications of poetry.

THISWAY IN JA

Dr C.Y. Thomas speaking at the Independence Park public meeting organized by the U.G. Staff Association, explained some of the social and economic problems that are Jamaica's tragedy- This was done shortly after his ban from re-entering Jamaica and reprinted in Ratoon, the Guyanese newspaper. (U.G. - University of Guyana)

Effectively Jamaica is a foreign enclave, a part of the belt of exploitation on the periphery of the white imperialist Atlantic powers. As such it is the producer of raw materials, staple foods and the place where services are offered cheaply. Thus sugar, bananas, bauxite and tourism - all dominated by foreign interests - are the mainstays of the economy. The land itself. Out of an area of 4,411 square miles or 2.8 million acres the bauxite industry controls at least 500,000 acres, the sugar industry 200,000 acres and hotels and private lots of foreigners another 100,000 acres. In other words about 30% of the total land area of the country has been alienated into foreign lands. When we recognize that land, in the sense that it either contains minerals, or has good agricultural potential or service potential because of its location, then we appreciate even further the appalling degrees of foreign alienation.

The inevitable by-product of such a system is poverty and unemployment. One in every 4 persons is without a job, and of those with jobs as much as 40% is underemployed, i.e. working less than a full working week. Average incomes are only about \$700 (Guyanese) per person. To make matters worse the distribution of income is also highly skewed. Sixty per cent of households earn 19% of the income. The result is malnutrition and disease. Each month the average Jamaican consumes the following: $1\frac{1}{2}$ lbs of fresh meat, $2\frac{1}{2}$ of milk, $5\frac{1}{4}$ ozs of butter, 3 ozs of cheese and 3 eggs. These figures are averages and in keeping with the distribution pattern of income receivers. Most of the population consumes far less than this average. It is not surprising therefore that one in every ten children under the age of five who dies - dies from malnutrition. In a survey conducted by the UWI it was shown that 70% of all children in Jamaica suffered from malnutrition.

Why does the society function in this way? What is the motive power? Essentially the answer lies in the complex of factors

which explains the drive for profit under the multinational corporations and the plantation system which be-straddles the land. The aim and end of all activity is to enrich the metropolitan centres from where the exploiting capital has come. Thus, progress is simply measured as the number of tons of bauxite which the companies have mined. The other side of the coin is never shown. Apart from the fact that this production contributes infinitely more to the metropolitan economies than that of Jamaica, within Jamaica itself it has led to the dispossession of the peasantry, their forcible migration to all parts of the world and the creation of a huge "lumpen" element throughout the city. In this situation one cannot remain an innocent bystander. Indeed, as has been pointed out elsewhere no bystander is innocent. Through his silence he sanctions the rape of the society. He is effectively on the side of the exploiters. Those who are not on their side can only be identified by their struggle to rid the land of exploitation.

FREEDOM FIGHTERS

The torch that burn through day and night,
The torch that burn with human life, sweat and blood,
The torch that burn with new-born,
The torch that make mothers and fathers mourn.
Freedom fighters, freedom fighters.

With their guns, banners, with cocktail bombs,
With bottle and stone,
With their cutlass, hatchet and knife,
Ought to burn, ought to loot,
With their inspiration and determination
To fight for liberation,
To fight for all country who is suppressed and dominated
By their suppressors,
Revolution fighters, revolution fighters,
To set themselves free, fighting for freedom,
Revolution fighters.

Freedom fighters all over the world,
Freedom fighters in the battlefield,
Freedom fighters in street corners or alley,
Freedom fighters who just fighting to be free,
Freedom fighters who's continuing to challenge and to destroy
Their suppressors, continue to fight
For freedom, for freedom.

Frank John-from Black Songs,

Longmac publishers, London 1969-

PRESS RELEASE
EXPERIMENT IN CONSCIOUSNESS

"Yard Theatre attempts its first small production, "CONSCIOUS-
-NESS I"(I and I or ONE?) on December 12th,13th,15th. A sur-
realist production written and directed by Marina Maxwell,
it includes poetry by Edward Braithwaite and Mortimo Planno.
Barry Chevannes on guitar has composed the music. Drumming
by Pat Lewis and the Planno Rastafari drummers. Venue is at
12 Princess Alice Drive, Kingston 7 (off Mona Road between
College Common and August Town.) Production begins at 9 p.m.
Admission is free.

Six dead mothers make statements about Africa, the
Afro-American struggle, Apartheid in South Africa, Vietnam and-
Masks by Edward Braithwaite and Black Mother by Mortimo Planno
point the agony of awakening consciousness of the Third World.
Ernest Cromwell dances The Spirit of the Third World.

Yard Theatre is a small experimental group which has
been working over the last year. It has brought together trained
and untrained artists and performers at its sessions at Mona
and in West Kingston. "The idea" says its members, "is to search
for dramatic expression that is essentially relevant to the
West Indies. We are starting very simply with the basics."

The cast of "Consciousness I" includes, Paulette Chevannes,
Jean Small, Claire Keane, Sandra Persaud, Doris Braithwaite, Anne
Weinholt, Edward Braithwaite, Mortimo Planno, Arthur Cromwell, Barry
Chevannes, Pat Lewis and Reginald Tulloch."

.....

If I am to explain "Consciousness
I", if it can be explained at all,
outside of the experience of a
production itself-being inside
the sounds, the movement, "the word"
and most of all being part of the
interaction of spirit, the consci-
ousness between the trained and
untrained artists themselves, pla-
ying in Yard Theatre with all its
intimacy, experiment and improvis-
ation-I'd say the thematic line
is DECOLONIZATION.

In the pulse of the West Indies

today is the realization that be-
fore we can begin to restructure
our society, in order to under-
stand fully the need for this
restructure and to be prepared
to participate fully in it, WE
HAVE TO RESTRUCTURE OUR MINDS-
to decolonize them, to come to
consciousness, to get the world
in perspective, to see ourselves,
our place, our real enemies so we
stop chopping up each other and
begin to work together for our
future as whole people.

AGE
Maxwell

We begin to accept who we are-blacks of the Third World whatever our shade or derivation. We knew all the time really but we weren't up to accepting the fact. But "times they-are-a-changin'!" This is what - Consciousness I" is about.

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And about the play's structure, if there is one at all. And need there be?-it is freeform, to allow us to do what we want to, say what we want to, investigate and experiment and do and find our own thing. The first statement, Black Mother by Mortimo Planno and the opening invocation-ary sequence is the claiming of ourselves juxtaposed to the 1st and 2nd Worlds. As Mortimo says "Black Mother, Hold my hand, I need to stand on my feet, I need to rise. I need to accuse the world, Black Mother Hold!"

The tremendously significant Rasta-fari rejection of "Babylon" sharply juxtaposes our position and demands that we claim ourselves, our gods, our own. The invocation points the agony and mournfulness of our own schisms and also, the new perspective of today as the glory of whiteness begins to lose its glamour, that disintegratory ascriptive basis of stratification in our neo-slavery societies in the Caribbean.

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But we still have a long way to go in the choices we have to make, the alternatives, the phases we must go through, the identifications we must make. Because we recognize Africa as our base, "the faint drums in the darkness" of our present, we have only just begun.

Edward Braithwaite's poetry which

takes over the second half of the statement develops the ritual of our passage. In tracing the agonies of our birth of consciousness, Rights of Passage, Masks and Islands, which I repeat I consider watershed in W.I. literature, point for us our present movement, "our here and now." "It is not enough" as Fanon and Braithwaite say, to reject we must go on, move, develop, grow in our own stature. We must build from Marcus Garvey.

Where do we grow? And the spirit-mothers of "Consciousness I" claim the spirit of the Third World in their statements-Africa, Black America, South Africa's anti-apartheid, Vietnam, the whole Third World. They expose the ravages of oppression and turn us to the work in hand.

And a libation is poured and a "veve" (Haitian symbol of the gods of the Vodoun pantheon) is made to symbolize the presence of our own gods. Edward Braithwaite's poetry is at centre. I am glad that for many the ritual was appreciated since Consciousness I is essentially a secular tribal ritual, parallel if we must draw parallels for clarity, to the tribalistic and pan-tribalistic vehicles in Africa today where nationalistic ethnic groups are working together as politically conscious members of a new rising element as an offspring of the impact of modern urbanization. This is part of the Yard Theatre experiment -to use as vehicle and thematically our Afro religious and other elements for secular, modern statements of -

consciousness. The medium itself is the message, the vehicle, the players, the sounds. And the content further carries the Third World identification--and this is danced, in celebration of our beginning. "Warriors of Third World Arise." End of the ten-finger exercise, one experiment chalked up to experience.

.....

THE CAPTIVE

-P

The Egypt of my bondage
is an Island
in a Continent
of Freedom
guarded
by swirling mad waters of
Repression.
The Egypt of my bondage
is an Island
for whose chains
I blame no-one:
I am a Blackman.
Captive I
before I was bought
or bartered for;
it was I who sold my flesh;
it was the voice of
the Captive in myself
which dulled the sting
of my Spears
and armed the guns
of my enemies.
Not superior-ity,
not weapons, skill--not
anything

except ourselves
made them win.
I tied and whipped and killed
myself
a thousand times
before they came.
The Egypt of my bondage is
an Island...
My people, my brothers, my sisters
are
the Continent of my Freedom
In the spirit of HARAMBEE
then
shall I again
cross
the mad, blue deep
Repression,
shall I again
meet Brothers, Sisters
in our
Continent of Freedom.

(From HARAMBEE .vol.1 no.1 Dec.1969)

U-BLINE

CONFERENCE

Trevor Munroe

CONFERENCE ON "HEMISPHERIC RELATIONS OF THE CARIBBEAN
AND THE COMMONWEALTH."

(Statement delivered to the participants and observers
after John Holmes and Victor Urquidi had given their
summation.)

Bongo-man publishes this statement in full after the distorted
reports in the Daily Gleaner, especially an article captioned-
"Dialogue of Resentment"-

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I too would like the opportunity of saying something about the
conference now drawing to a close. Like John Holmes I am puzzled
as to why he is here. But perhaps the puzzle is a superficial one
only. I say this because it seems in keeping with a number of
other things about this conference. It is no accident, for example,
that the summary of this conference, dealing let me remind you,
with "Hemispheric Relations of the Caribbean and the Commonwealth",
has been chaired by an American, and given jointly by a Canadian
and a Mexican. Certainly this is roughly in keeping with the
academic power structure of the hemisphere; more importantly how-
ever, it is in keeping with the orientation of this conference,
for only representatives from these areas could possibly have
derived any significant value from the experiences of the last
few days. Or rather let me qualify that- the only value that the
Caribbean men could have gotten from it is a greater insight into
the valuelessness of these exercises.

To understand this, let us look for a moment on the structure and
working of this conference. The conference brochure tells us that
there were 31 participants. No less than 18 of these were born
outside the Caribbean and Latin America, thirteen are actually
based in North American institutions. In addition, 15 of the 25
participants, whose ages are listed in this brochure, were born
before 1930 and socialised into an academic environment which
partially incapacitates them from understanding some of the
newer formulations attempting to come to grips with the third
world, and particularly the Caribbean environment. In the light
of these non-qualifications of most of the participants, one is
not surprised, though no less angered, to see this conference begin
with a "pro-seminar" "designed to brief conferees on current
Caribbean issues...so that some understanding of the political
context of the West Indies can be gained."

BONGJO-MAN

Now, I ask you, what could one expect from a conference on the Caribbean whose participants needed to be briefed in this way at the beginning of the exercise?

The short answer is, I suppose, one could expect what in fact has taken place. Let us see. The first two contributions by Thornton and Spengler set the tone of the North Atlantic, and regrettably some Latin American contributions. Thornton didn't even write a paper—one would be unkind to say because of the shortness of the time between briefing and performance—and displayed the most incredible arrogance, ignorance and paternalism in dealing with the subject assigned him—"The Colonial Legacy".

Forgetting Toussaint, Tacky and Sharpe, he advised us not to over-stress our history partly because it has little to 'uplift the heart' ignoring the multi-national corporation, the Bay of Bigs and Santo Domingo, he suggested that perhaps concern at this time with imperialism was "tilting at windmills"; remembering the biases of his own training, he dismisses the utility of the 'plural society model' with the self-satisfied excuse that perhaps his mind "doesn't work that way." The next or rather the first paper was therefore Spengler's, who at least organized his presentation in written form. Nevertheless as Best pointed out, the work was largely a parade of all the methodological and interpretative errors of North Atlantic, and more generally, orthodox economic scholarship looking at Caribbean

reality. One is not saying, ladies and gentlemen, that these people should or even can understand Caribbean reality; one is saying however, that a conference such as this is hardly the place to correct this ignorance and, if it is, then native intellectuals ought to have better things to do than run a brief winter course under the guise of participating in an academic conference.

After this illuminating beginning, one could understand, if not justify, the absence of black faces in the sessions following (though there weren't that many natives to begin with anyway). One could also understand the total incapacity of conferees to come to grips with Best's presentation, by far the most serious of the conference. After all, men who had to be given "some understanding of the political context of the West Indies on Sunday afternoon" could hardly have gotten any understanding of the labyrinthine complexity of the interrelationships between Caribbean history, economy and polity by Wednesday morning.

Doxey, the discussant admitted as much, and set the tone of the non-discussion which followed by some superficial remarks about CARIFTA, tourism and the potential contributions of the foreign corporation.

All in all then, the entire conference seems to have been a pre-seminar for outsiders. This being so, even the most superficial observer must have been struck by the anomalies. In a black area,

only two or three black conference participants were evident most of the time; in a conference on Hemispheric relations, nobody from Chile, Peru, Bolivia, Dominican Republic, Haiti or Cuba; in a conference where the power of the U.S. establishment was raised repeatedly, no representative of the black movement or radical intellectuals from the U.S.; in a society where very often the educated are the misinformed, no public session or panel arranged on any one of the spare afternoons! Indeed, Ladies and Gentlemen, these anomalies suggest at least one conclusion—the practise of this conference—entirely neo-colonialist—contradicted the theory of its better presentation, much of which was anti-imperialist. All this of course, would not be so bad if the conference could be explained as an exception to previous exercises of this kind, or a deviation from the character of this University. In fact neither excuse is available to us. The two previous conferences on International Relations were equally if not more unsatisfactory. The first conference in March 1966 aimed "to stimulate thinking in the Caribbean about international problems by exposing Caribbean leaders to the views of eminent outside experts on world affairs." But, at least, a session of that conference was open to UWI staff, students and public and certainly, at the level of speech if little else, Singham's comments about foreign experts at the opening of the pre-seminar on Sunday, marked an advance on 1966. The second conference, in March 1967, on "Caribbean-Latin American political and econ-

-mic relations," was almost totally official, with heads of governments, diplomats and bureaucrats making up the overwhelming majority of participation. Again apart from two civil servants from the Netherlands Antilles and one man from Santo Domingo among the 125 delegates, our Dutch, French and Spanish speaking brothers were ignored. Hence we see that the first conference exposed the backward natives to the foreign experts, the second exposed the officials and bureaucrats of neo-colonial regimes to one another, and the third exposed the foreign not-so-experts to the brightness of their recently graduated charges. What I have to ask, is, when will this neo-colonial farce end? When will Fanon's "native intellectuals" be exposed to one another?

Perhaps the answer is never; perhaps it is naive to expect UWI to participate in anything but 'pre-seminars' similar to this one with institutions similar to Duke University and the Canadian Institute of International Affairs. Certainly this kind of conference is entirely consistent with the intent of Sir James Irvine and his counterparts throughout the ex-British Empire in Africa and Asia, who set up these Universities. Certainly the intention was in part, to set up concessions to colonial militancy which would be a source of anti-revolutionary and therefore anti-popular, thought, activity and activists. This being so, this conference can take some pride from having marked another milestone in the neo-colonial enterprise.

BONGOMAN

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